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*A Letter to Daniel Wray, Esq; on the Introduction,
Progress, State, and Condition, of the Vine in Britain:
By the Rev. Samuel Pegge.*

Read at the Society of ANTIQUARIES Jan. 12, 1764.



DEAR SIR,

THE culture of the vine in England having been lately under contemplation [a]; I thought it might be worth while, and by no means mal à propos, to examine minutely into the cultivation of it more antiently amongst us; and I here beg leave to present you with the result of my enquiries, as a testimony of that inviolable regard I have so long entertained for your undeserved friendship.

In that very particular description which Julius Caesar has given us of this island in his 5th Book, there is no mention made of the vine; for though he says, “ materia cujusque generis, ut “ in Gallia est; praeter fagum atque abietem;” though Pliny

[a] Museum Rusticum.

reckons the vine to be a tree, as do others indeed, both Greeks and Latins [*b*]; and though there were undoubtedly many vines in Gaul, as may be noted hereafter, yet the vine was not commonly esteemed a timber-tree, which is what is usually meant by the word *materia*. I accordingly observe, that the great naturalist Pliny has nothing concerning this tree as a native of Britain, or as there flourishing, in that large account of it which he has inserted in his XIVth Book. And from hence I think one may safely conclude, that the vine did not grow in Britain, either when Caesar or when Pliny wrote. And, indeed, Cornelius Tacitus, writing of the times when Julius Agricola commanded here, expressly denies us the vine, "*Solum*," says he, "*praeter oleam vitemque, et caetera calidioribus terris oriri sucta, patiens frugum foecundum* [*c*]."

Now, if there were no vines here in Agricola's time, it is not likely there should be any for many years after; for though there were vines in Gaul [*d*], and it may seem a very obvious matter that they should be brought hither from Aquitain, or other parts of that province, yet the laws of the empire would not suffer it; for, according to my apprehension of things, where there were no vineyards already, the provincials were not permitted to plant them. Domitian, in his time, prohibited by an edict the making of any new vineyards even in Italy; and ordered that in the provinces the vineyards should be displanted, leaving not above half the quantity at most in any place [*e*]; and from thenceforward none could plant vineyards but with the permission of the Emperors [*f*]. The reason of this prohibition was the too great plenty of wine, and the scarcity of corn; and that the sedulous cultivation of the

[*b*] Horat. I. Od. xviii. and Dacier ad loc.

[*c*] Tacitus, Vit. Agric. cap. xii.

[*d*] Solinus, cap. xxiv. and Casaub. ad Suet. Domit. cap. vii.

[*e*] Suet. Domit. cap. vii. ver. 14.

[*f*] Casaub. ad Suet. Dacria ad Eutrop. IX. cap. xvii. et ad Aur. Victor. de Caesar. cap. xxxvii.

former caused agriculture to be neglected; however, there was another cause in respect of the provinces, and which consequently would affect Britain, to wit, that drunkenness there oftentimes occasioned seditions [g]. There was, however, a relaxation of this edict as to Asia [h]; and as to the edict in general, the Emperor did not rigorously exact the observation of it; for, says Suetonius, in respect of this Emperor, "Quare pavidus semper atque
 "anxius, minimis etiam suspicionibus præter modum commovebatur: ut edicti de excidendis vineis propositi gratiam facere
 "non alia magis re compulsus credatur, quam quod sparsi libelli
 "cum his verbis erant,

"Κῆρ μὲ φάτις ἐπὶ ῥίξαν, ὅμως ἐνὶ καρποφορήσῃ,
 "Ὅσον ἐπισπείσῃς Καίσαρι θυμὸν."

In regard to Britain, the Romans, at the time of the edict, were in peaceable and quiet possession of only a small part of the island; inasmuch that they had not time to plant many vines here; but afterwards, when such an edict was in being, one cannot suppose the provincials here would ever think of cultivating them.

THIS then was the state of things till the reign of the Emperor Probus, who acceded A. D. 276, and reigned about six years. It is not to be supposed, however, that the provinces till this time were any of them without wine, or that the Romans there subsisted without the use of it; on the contrary, if that *seria*, or jar, described by Dr. Musgrave [i], was a wine vessel, as he conjectures [k], it is apparent, that this generous liquor was not wanting even in Britain, for the vessel was found among the

[g] Casaub. and Pitisc. ad Suet. This seems to be the ground of that piece of policy in Mohammed, who denied his disciples the use of wine for this reason amongst others. Prideaux, Life of Mahomet, pag. 106. seq.

[h] Casaub. and Pitisc. ad Suet.

[i] Musgrave, l. pag. 192. IV. pag. 11.

[k] Idem, l. pag. 194. IV. pag. 11. 13.

Belgae, at the *Devizes*. Indeed, the Romans themselves could not well live without wine [f], and no doubt they soon taught the provincials the use of it. Nay, we know not certainly that the Britons of these times had any other liquor but wine and milk [m], and both the Romans and the natives could easily be furnished with the former by importation. Dr. Musgrave, therefore, seems to lay too much stress upon the discovery of this jar, when he infers from it [n], that the Romans who were resident in the reign of Alexander Mammææ, at the place where the vessel was found, lived *delicately* and *luxuriously*; for certainly the appearance of a single vessel, at a place where wine was an usual beverage, cannot amount to so much as that, since it only shews that they had then some wine there.

To return to the Emperor Probus; he, in the latter part of his time, restored the privilege of the vineyard to most, if not all the provinces in the North and West; and the cause of this indulgence I take to have been, that when Proculus and Bonosus assumed the purple in opposition to him, all the Germans adhered steadfastly to his party; "Unum sane sciendum est, quod Germani omnes, quum ad auxilium essent rogati a Proculo, Probo potius perservire maluerunt, quam cum Bonoso et Proculo esse [o];" for, upon this it follows in the author, "Gallis omnibus et Hispanis ac Britannis [p] hinc permisit, ut vites haberent, vinumque conficerent [q]." Casaubon, citing the pas-

[f] Musgrave, l. c.

[m] Cæsar, De B. G. Lib. v.

[n] Musgrave, l. pag. 94. IV. pag. 11. 13.

[o] Vopiscus, pag. 294. ed. Francof.

[p] The Annotator upon Rapin, l. pag. 21. observes, "Eutropius has it, Vinctas Gallos et Pannonos (instead of Britannos) habere permisit," l. ix. cap. xvii. by which he seems to insinuate, that the copies of Vopiscus may be here corrupted; but this is not probable, f. r. as we shall shew, the liberty of the vineyard was made very general indeed; how come the Spaniards otherwise to be included? The Palatine MS. of Vopiscus, and Gruter read *Britannos*.

[q] Vopiscus, *ibid.*

sage in his commentary upon Suetonius[r], reads *hic* instead of *binc*, contrary to the editions and Madam Dacier, who lays a stress on this word *binc*, as we shall have occasion to remark below. If this was not the reason of the indulgence, the Emperor probably did it to ingratiate himself with the people of the Northern and Western parts, whom he saw to be so prone to revolt.

BUT, whatever was the cause, it was toward the latter end of his reign, and after the commotions raised by Proculus and Bonofus were suppressed, that Probus permitted the provincials to have vines. This is the force of *binc* above, as Madam Dacier has remarked [r], and as is very evident from the account given of this matter by Aurel. Victor, "namque ut ille [Hannibal] oleis "Africæ pleraque, per legiones, quarum otium reipublicæ atque "doctoribus (f. ductoribus, cum Schotto) suspectum rebatur; "eodem modo hic [Probus] Galliam Pannoniæque et Moesiarum "colles vinetis replevit: *postea sane* quam barbarorum attritæ "gentes sunt, quæ, nostris principibus suorum scelere interfectis, "irruerant; simul caesis, Saturnino per Orientem; Agrippinæ "Bonoso ab (sic Schottus) exercitu [t]." So in his Epitome, cap. xxxvii. he relates the suppression of Saturninus in the East, and of Proculus and Bonofus at Agrippina, before he mentions this affair of the vines. I conceive, then, that it might be about A. D. 280, that licence for planting vineyards was granted to the provincials. The licence, it seems, was very general; for the Pannonii and the Mœsi, as well as the Gauls, the Spaniards, and the Britons partook of it [u]. And he himself, making use of the hands and labour of the soldiers, planted mount Almus, or

[r] Ad Suet. Domit. cap. vii. But in Vopiscus he explains it only *post hæc*.

[s] Ad. Aur. Viêt. Cæf. cap. xxxvii.

[t] See Dacier ad loc.

[u] Aur. Viêt. Cæf. cap. xxxvii. Epitome, cap. xxxvii. Eutrop. ix. cap. xvii.

Alma [w], near Sirmium, and mount Aureus in the upper Moesia, with vines [x]; and then it follows in Eutropius, by a very general and comprehensive expression, "Et provincialibus co-
"lendas (vineas) dedit."

Thus it may be supposed the Britons began to plant vines in this island soon after the year 280. And accordingly Bede, who finished his history A. D. 731, writes expressly, in his description of Britain, "Vineas etiam quibusdam in locis germinant [y]"; which account is also inserted from him in Ralph Higden's Polychronicon [z], and in Richard of Cirencester [a]. The acquiescence of Ralph in this case is of weight, because he well knew what he assented to, since, when he comes to Bede's assertion in respect of Ireland, he then flatly contradicts him, as will be seen below.

To observe this by the way, it was most probably in this interval, and during this scarcity of wine in the provinces, to wit, before the year 280, that the Gauls and Britons had recourse to the making of other liquors equally intoxicating. Hence Ammianus Marcellinus says of the Gauls, "Vini avidum genus, affectans
"ad vini similitudinem multiplices potus [b]."

It is most natural to suppose, that the propagation of the vine would be first attempted in the Southern parts of the island, both on account of the climate's being there the warmest, and their proximity to Gaul, from whence, in all probability, the plants would be first brought. Thus Winchester and its environs were formerly famous for vines, as appears from the old verses cited by Mr. Somner:

[w] So the MS. of Eutropius in the public library at Cambridge; and see *Vine-tus* ad loc. See also Victor in Epitome, Vopiscus, and Cellarius, l. pag. 356.

[x] Eutropius, Victor, Vopiscus, Univ. Hist. XV. pag. 478.

[y] Bede, Hist. Eccl. l. 1.

[z] Polychron. pag. 192.

[a] Ric. Corin. pag. 13.

[b] Amm. Marc. lib. xv.

"Testis est London ratibus, Wintonia Baccho [c]," &c.

The testimony of John Twyne, in his commentary; who supposes the city of Winchester to have taken its name from hence [d], is very ample and expresses: "Haec vero iisdem temporibus Britannis *Caerguent*, eodem quoque sensu a Romanis dicta est Wintonia: et temporis tractu corrupte nostro more *Wintonia*, a Saxonibus postea Winchester, id est, urbs vini vel vinifera, quasi dicas, munitio vel fortificatio ubi crevit optimum vinum in Britannia, appellata est. Nam cum antiquitus haec insula in locis campestribus ac montosis, qui solaribus radiis exponeretur, vitibus ad vinum exprimendum confitis abundaret, ac fieret non illaudandum: nullum tamen erat Wintonienfis Lyaeo latice [e] tractus anteferendum, aut ne conferendum quidem: quanquam Malmesburienfis Gloucestrensis agri vites ac vinum tantopere laudibus evehat [f]."

As to Canterbury, and that neighbourhood, the same author makes the abbat of St. Augustine's say, "Sed ne nostra sane domus vincis carbat olim, quibus Northomes [g], Fishpole, Littlebourne, Conningbrooke, in parochia de Sellinge, cum nonnullis aliis destinabantur." Mr. Somner conjectures, that the street at Canterbury, called Winecheape, might perhaps take its name from being a market for wines [h]. However, he elsewhere informs us, that in the time of Henry de Eastry, prior of Canterbury, A. D. 1285, seq. that church, as well as the abbey of St. Augustine's there, was plentifully furnished with vineyards,

[c] Somner, Antiq. Canterb. pag. 170.

[d] Other authors do not agree with him; particularly not Mr. Baxter, nor Dr. Musgrave, who, l. pag. 50. observes, that the etymon of *Venta* is not yet ascertained.

[e] Legendum forte *latice*.

[f] Joh. Twynus de Rebus Albioniciis, &c. pag. 116.

[g] These were planted about 1320. Thorn, Chron. inter X scriptores, col. 2036.

[h] Somner, Antiq. Canterb. pag. 81.

as at Colton, Berton, St. Martin's, Chertham, Brook, and Hollingbourn, all manors belonging to that house, and all situate in Kent [i].

At Rochester, a large piece of ground adjoining to the city is now called *The Vine*; another is to called at Sevenoke in Kent; and this also was the name of the seat of the barons Sandes, now extinct, in Hampshire. On occasion of the mention of this last place Mr. Camden observes, that we had vines in Britain ever since the time of Probus the Emperor, "for it was he who gave liberty to the Britains and others to have vines [†]." agreeable to what has been delivered above. At Halling, near Rochester, the bishop of that see had formerly a vineyard; for when Edward II. in his nineteenth year, was at Bockingfold, "bishop Hamon sent him thither," as Mr. Lambarde tells us, "a present of his drinkes, and withal both wine and grapes of his own growth in his vineyard at Halling, which is now a good plaine meadowe [j]." Captain Nicholas Toke, of Godington in Great Chart, in Kent, "hath so industriously and elegantly," says Philipot, "cultivated and improved our English vines, that the wine, pressed and extracted out of their grapes, seems not only to parallel, but almost to out-rival that of France [m]."

Sussex being a county so far South, one may reasonably expect to hear of something material from thence; and accordingly Mr. Lambarde writes, "History hath mention, that there was about that tyme (the Norman invasion) great store of vines at Santlac (near to Battel in Suffex) [n]." He adds, as to Berk-

[i] Somner, *Antiq. Canterb.* pag. 145.

[†] Camden, *Brit. col.* 147. See also Rapin, I. pag. 21.

[j] Lambard's *Peramb. of Kent*, pag. 419.

[m] Philipot *Villare Cantianum*, pag. 112.

[n] Lambard's *Top. Dist.* pag. 350.

shire, "The like whereof I have redd to have been at Wyndfore, "in so moche as tythe of theim hathe bene theare yelded in great "plenty, which gyveth me to think, that wyue hath bene made "longe fence withiū the realme; although in our memorie it "be accompted a great deintye to heare of." See a further account of this affair at Windfor, pag. 423. where the author observes, that some part of the wine was spent in the king's household, and some sold for the king's profit.

JOHN Twyne has observed, that William of Malmesbury has extolled the vines and wine of Gloucestershire; and the passage is extant in William's book *De Gestis Pont.* IV. pag. 283. See also Camden, [edit. 2. col. 411.] and bishop Gibson's insertion there.

"AT Rageneia, in Essex," says Domesday Book, "there is "one park, and six arpennies of vineyard, which, if it takes well, "yields twenty modii of wine," which, says Mr. Camden[s], "I "here take notice of, both for the French word *arpennis* [p], and "for the mention of the wine made in this island."

We hear of vineyards also in Middlesex [g], the Isle of Ely[r], at Dunstable[s], and at St. Edmundsbury; for in the engraved plan of that town, the vineyard of the abbey is particularly noted.

As to Northamptonshire, Martin Abbat of Peterborough, T. Regis Stephani, is said expressly, in the Saxon chronicle, to have planted a vineyard[r]; indeed, I think, there were few great monasteries here in England but what had their vineyards.

[s] A measure peculiar to vineyards, meadows, and woods. Spelm. Gloss. in voc.

[p] Camden, Brit. col. ccccxi. Spelm. Gloss. v. ARPENNIS.

[g] Spelm. ibid.—In London in East Smithfield; Vine-street, Hatton-garden; another in St. Giles's in the Fields. Bagford's letter to Hearne, p. xxv. Add to these, the vineyard of Houndsditch, and Vine-street, Piccadilly.

[r] Ibid.—A piece of ground at Denny abbey, Cambridgeshire, is called the Vineyard.

[s] "Prior dirationavit apud Scaecarium misericordiam Stephani Vinitoris et "Petri Vinitoris sui." Annal. Dunst. pag. 94. where Mr. Hearne conjectures we should read *filiis sui*; but I think without cause, these two persons being probably not father and son, but rather employed in the vineyard of the priory.

[r] Pag. 240. See also R. Swapham, pag. 105. 108, 109. This vineyard was large.

VINES have also come to tolerable perfection both in Oxfordshire and Staffordshire, "The vine," says Dr. Plot, "has been improved by the right worshipful Sir Henry Lyttleton to that advantage at Over-Arley, which is situate low and warm, being surrounded with hills, that he has made wine so good there, that it has been altogether undistinguishable from the best French wines by the most judicious palates; but this, I suppose, was done only in some favourable over-hot summer, though, if the vines were placed advantageously, 'tis possible it might be done in an indifferent year; the reverend and learned Dr. Ralph Bathurst, president of Trinity College, and dean of Wells, having made as good claret here at Oxon. A. D. 1685, which was a very mean year for that purpose, as one could wish to drink. Which is so far from wonder, that we are informed they planted vineyards, and made wines, antiently over all the kingdom; for though Tacitus says, it bore all sorts of fruits *praeter oleam et vitem*, yet we find in Vopiscus, that the emperor Probus, for some good service done, permitted the Britons to plant them vineyards, which had been no great favour, could they not have made wines [u]."

BUT there are evidences of vineyards even further North than this; there was one at Darley abbey in the county of Derby [w]. And, if I be not mistaken, the several villages there of South Winfield, North Winfield, and Wingerworth, all take their names from the vineyards formerly flourishing at those places.

THEY had vines also in Ireland, according to venerable Bede, who testifies, that it was not in his time *vinearum experts* [x]; and

[u] Plot, Nat. Hist. of Staff. p. 380.—Several places called vineyards about Shrewsbury in Bowen's map of Shropshire.

[w] Grant 4 and 5 Ph. and Mary, from Sir William West to his son Edmund, penes Joh. Heath de Derby, gen.

[x] Bede, Eccl. Hist. pag. 42.

Richard of Cirencester agrees with him [y]; but Ralph Higden contradicts him upon this head [z].

MANY more passages relative to this subject might, no doubt, be collected together from the writings of our antiquaries, but these are all that occur to me at present; and, it is hoped, will be sufficient for the purpose, namely, to shew, what Dr. Plot above observes, that the Britons *made wines antiently over (almost) all the kingdom.*

A LEARNED man, without a name, cited by Mr. Camden [a], fancied that the passage above quoted from Vopiscus, concerning the emperor Probus, might slip from him unawares, intimating, that the country was unfit for vines; whereas, says Mr. Camden, in answer, and very justly, "We not only have vines *now*, but "for certain had great store in former days." This, indeed, sufficiently appears from the account above given of the several plantations.

THE cause of the disuse and the neglect of the vineyards here in England was, according to some, the sloth of the inhabitants, and not the indisposition of the climate [b]; according to others, it was the cheapness of the Aquitain wine, and the ease by which it could be brought over, together with the great advantage that could be made of the pastures otherwise [c]. Twyne attributes it partly to our indolence, and partly to that fondness for French wines which came upon us in the reign of Henry III. "Verum hæc (*vineæ*) et quotquot in Anglia fuerant, ad vinum comparatae, "temporum vicissitudine, et incolarum socordia deficere, maxime "Henrici tertii, Johannis filii, temporibus coepere, cum gliscen-

[y] Ric. Corin. pag. 42.

[z] Higden, pag. 180.

[a] Britannia. col. xc.

[b] Camden, Brit. col. cccxix.

[c] Viridungus ad Taciti Agric. cap. xii.

"tibus domesticis et externis bellis, nostrates Gallicum vinum et
 "sanguinem ardentius sitirent [*d*]," It is certain, that in the
 reign of Henry III, about A. D. 1260, a Dolium of the best
 wine could be bought for 4*s*. sometimes for two marks, and
 sometimes for 2*s*. [*e*].

It is not to be supposed that at any time, since the first intro-
 duction of the vine here, the inhabitants of the island produced
 wine enough for their own consumption, but rather, that in all
 seasons they imported a great deal from abroad. Thus in the
 later periods, when the monasteries were at the richest, and vine-
 yards were the most numerous and the most flourishing, we find,
 that at Canterbury, the prior of the Trinity, now called Christ
 Church, received two-pence upon every vessel of wine coming
 into the port of Sandwich [*f*]. And Philip, king of France,
 made a grant of one hundred *modii* [*g*] of wine annually to the
 same church [*h*]. A great quantity was imported from Gascoigne;
 for at the Jubilee, A. D. 1420, it is noted, that such care was
 taken by the victuallers, that "lagena vini rubei de Vasconia
 "tunc vendebatur ad octo denarios, et lagena vini albi ad sex de-
 "narios," &c. [*i*]. At the inthronization feast of abp. War-
 ham, A. D. 1504, or of abp. Robert Winchelsea, A. D. 1295
 (for the bill of fare which Mr. Battely in his Appendix, page 27.
 gives as abp. Warham's, is in Dr. Drake's edition of Matth.
 Parker, page 63. given as abp. Winchelsea's, but I take it to
 belong to the former) there was provided as follows:

"De vino rubeo vi dolia. prec. dol. iiii^l.

"De vino clareto iv dol. prec. dol. lxxiii^l iiii^d

[*d*] Twyni Comment. l. c.

[*e*] W. Whitteley, pag. 130.

[*f*] Philipot Villare, p. 93.

[*g*] The modius was 36 gallons. Spelm. Hence the French *myd*.

[*h*] Philipot's Visitation, in the Herald's office.

[*i*] Somner, Append. pag. 51.

"De

"De vino albo elect. unum dolium price 3^l 6^s 8^d

"De vino albo pro coquina i dol. price 3^l

"De malvesey i but. price 4^l

"De osley i pipe price 3^l

"De vino de Reane [*k*] ii almes. price 1^l 6^s 8^d [*l*].

'Tis plain, from the prices being mentioned, that the wine used on the occasion was chiefly imported, and the reason that so much was employed in the kitchen was, that it was a fifth dinner, and consequently much wine would be consumed in the several fauces. The priory of Dunstable, upon the failure of their malt A. D. 1274, consumed five dolia of wine [*m*]; and, as it appears, these wines were chiefly imported [*n*]. At the great inthronization feast of George Nevil, abp. of York, 6 Ed. IV. an hundred tuns of wine were used [*o*]; too much, doubtless, to be thought to grow in his own territories, or indeed to be easily purchased in England. Henry Bowet, abp. also of York, is said to have consumed eighty tun of claret yearly in his house [*p*]; and it appears from Matthew Paris, that Hugh Norwold, bp. of Ely, A. D. 1252, had much wine in his cellars in casks [*q*]. King John A. D. 1199, ordained by a statute, "Quod nullum tonellum vini
"Pictavenfis vendatur carius quam xx solidis; et nullum tonel-
"lum vini Andegavenfis carius quam xxiv. solidis; et nullum to-
"nellum vini Franciae [*r*] carius quam pro xxv solidis; nisi vi-
"num illud adeo bonum sit, quod aliquis velit pro eo dare circa
"duas marcas ad altius," &c. [*s*]. It seems they drank abundance

[*k*] I suppose *Rhenish*, *Aun* being the proper measure for it.

[*l*] Battely's Appendix, pag. 27.

[*m*] Annal. Dunst. pag. 425.

[*n*] Ibid. pag. 628. 641.

[*o*] Battely's Appendix, pag. 29.

[*p*] Drak's Eboracum, pag. 440.

[*q*] M. Paris, pag. 355.

[*r*] Poictou and Anjou then belonged to England.

[*s*] Annal. Burton. pag. 257.

of wine in England at this time; for it follows, after mention made of the alteration contained in this ordinance, "Et sic repleta
" est terra potu et potatoribus."

As the wine in Britain was never sufficient in quantity for the use and consumption of the inhabitants, so I conceive it was not very excellent in goodness. Mr. Camden acknowledges, and very justly, that as soon as the sun has passed Leo, the afternoon heat in autumn is too little in strength and continuance in Britain to ripen and concoct grapes to perfection [r]. But nevertheless, there is no reason to say as Monsieur Rapin does, that no great profit was reaped by the permission granted by the Emperor Probus [u]; for the benefit was considerable questionless, although the British wines might not be of the richest and most generous kind, nor adequate in quantity to the consumption. William Thorn expressly testifies, that, in his time, the vineyard of his abbey in Nordhome was "ad commodum et magnum honorem [w]". But as to this article of goodness and perfection in the wines here made, something may be seen concerning them in the quotations produced above: the performances of Mr. King are known to many; and the Museum Rusticum will inform of the quality of the Burgundy made by his grace the duke of Norfolk at Arundel in Suffex.

Whittington, Dec. 31,
1763.

SAMUEL PEGGE.

[r] Camden, col. MCCCXII.

[u] Rapin, l. pag. 21.

[w] Thorn. Chron. col. MMXXVI.

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